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EIP-AGRI Focus Group

New entrants into farming: lessons to foster innovation and entrepreneurship

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1. Introduction

Sustaining a cohort of new entrants to farming is widely recognised as crucial to the ongoing vitality and competitiveness of the agricultural sector and rural regions in Europe. Although direct succession within a farming business remains the most common mechanism by which 'new entrants' enter farming, there is evidence that a growing number of new entrants have limited previous experience with agriculture. These new entrants can bring with them a number of resources gained outside of farming, including skills, networks and financial capital, leading to innovative production, marketing and management practices which spread throughout farming systems. Alternatively, new entrants who pursue lifestyle-based approaches to farming, or who are primarily interested in the investment potential of agricultural land and associated tax reliefs, may be having more complex cultural, environmental and economic impacts on agricultural land management and rural communities. The Focus Group will focus primarily on the innovations and approaches which have the potential to have a positive economic impact on the agricultural sector.

To date, little is known about the characteristics of these inexperienced new entrants to farming – the routes they take into farming, the nature of the resources they bring, the types of farms they acquire, their business and production practices, and the conditions under which they represent opportunities for innovation and development of the European agriculture sector.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to:

- a) To establish a common understanding about the purpose of the Focus Group;
- b) To identify key questions for discussion at the first Focus Group meeting. These include:
 - What is a 'new entrant' to farming? What is the best way to define 'new entrants'?
 - How and why do new entrants become involved in farming? What types of business models do they adopt?
 - What innovative actions are being undertaken by new entrants, which could usefully be spread throughout the agricultural sector?
- c) To begin drawing together the available knowledge on new entrants to farming, as a preliminary basis for the Focus Group Final Report.

Through the Focus Group process, we will review research evidence and practical experiences of new entrants to European agriculture, assessing what is known about these individuals, households and businesses, and their impact within farming systems and rural communities. We will focus in particular on identifying the innovative ways that new entrants have entered the sector and established financially successful businesses, with a view to considering how these innovations can generate new growth and inspiration on Europe's farms.

2. Defining new entrants

In 2012, the report to the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (Directorate-General for Internal Policies - DGIP) on EU Measures to Encourage and Support New Entrants identified three possible routes into farming: inheritance, early retirement and *ex novo* (i.e. individuals with no prior experience of agriculture). It is these *ex novo* entrants which are of concern to the Focus Group. However, defining the status of an individual new entrant in practical terms is more complex than the three identified routes suggest. Owing to the considerable barriers to new entrants – particularly access to land and sufficient capital to initiate viable businesses – *ex novo* new entrants may be accessing land held by their extended families (e.g. by a grandparent, aunt or uncle, directly or through marriage). They may also be entering the industry as tenants or contract farmers (i.e. they may not be legally identified as the 'primary farmer'). They may have been raised on a farm but establish a new farming enterprise based on their own resources or a cash inheritance from the family farm (i.e. inheritance of farming resources but not the family farm holding). The new entrant may also be returning as a direct successor to a farm later in life. Recent analysis of the apparent young farmer shortage in Europe found that new entrants cross the age spectrum and operate farms at a range of scales (Zagata and Sutherland, 2015). It is thus important to identify which 'new entrants' fall within the scope of the working group discussions. Further information on how 'new entrants' are defined in EU and international legislation, as well as academic studies, can be found in Appendix A.

Proposed working draft definition of a new entrant to farming:

A natural person, group of people or legal entity who have within the past five years established a new agricultural holding or farming business in their own name(s). The natural person, group of people or legal entity should be actively farming (i.e. producing agricultural products for sale) and be either establishing a new agricultural holding or returning to a family-held holding after a minimum of 10 years of off-farm employment.

This definition thus includes:

- Individuals and groups who are completely new to farming
- Individuals and groups who were raised in rural areas and/or employed on farms but have not held a farm in their immediate family or inherited agricultural land
- Individuals or groups who grew up on farms but are establishing a new farming operation separately from their parents' farm
- Individuals or groups who are establishing new farms on tenanted or contracted land.
- All age categories
- Individuals and groups who have no formal agricultural training
- Individuals and groups who are pursuing farming on a part-time or non-commercial basis (i.e. their farm does not represent their primary livelihood)
- Corporations
- Direct successors (following a period of off-farm employment)

The definition excludes agricultural workers (i.e. farm employees) and direct successors who have worked on a farm for most of their adult lives.

Discussion questions

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this definition of new entrants?
- What would be a better way to define new entrants?

3. Motivations of new entrants. Why do they decide to start farming?

To enable new entrants, it is important to understand what makes them want to become involved in farming. The evidence for motivations of new entrants who are not successors is limited, owing to the small amount of research on this topic. However, there is literature available on the motivations of specific types of farmer where new entrants are more common (e.g. organic farming, alternative agri-food networks, small-holding). As a result, the evidence on motivations may disproportionately represent the alternative or recreational (as opposed to commercial) motivations of new entrants to farming.

Financial opportunities:

New entrants to commercial farming can be expected to seek to make a living, or part of a living, from their farm. Although hobby farmers may not seek to earn a profit, many hobby farms do seek to break even, and therefore have some commercial orientation.

Examples:

- The Portuguese micro-business start-ups in the ProAKIS new entrant study identified the opportunity to generate supplemental income and access Rural Development Programme subsidies as important drivers (Madeirera et al., 2015).
- The appreciating value of agricultural land and favourable tax status of operating a farm (including the opportunity to transfer wealth between generations) were identified as motivators by key informants in the Scottish FarmPath case study, although not by the lifestyle farmers themselves (Sutherland, 2013).

Economic duress:

Self-provisioning is the historical foundation for agricultural production. Some new entrants can be expected to start farms to self-provision or as a form of employment after job loss.

Examples:

- Brunori et al. (2013) describes a cohort in Italy who returned to family-held land to produce agricultural goods in response to the economic crisis of 2006-2008.
- Madureira et al. (2015) also identified the financial crisis as a driver of new small-scale soft fruit production enterprises in Portugal. In that case, state supports were provided to new entrants to small-scale farming specifically to address the combination of high unemployment and land abandonment.

Lifestyle aspirations:

Farming represents an important 'way of life' for a variety of groups. New entrants often seek a particular way of life or lifestyle when they enter the farming sector. For example, fulfilling a desire to maintain horses or livestock requires access to agricultural land. Equally, high quality food or environmental amenities may feature.

Examples:

- Farms are often identified as beneficial environments in which to raise children.
- Self-provisioning is important to small-holders and is practiced to varying degrees on commercial and non-commercial farms.
- A desire to produce healthy, pesticide free food is common amongst new entrants to organic farming. Low food miles also feature.
- Interaction with nature and environmental activities are common amongst lifestyle land managers (e.g. tree planting, construction of ponds).

Work ambitions:

Farming as an occupation involves specific opportunities and constraints, which can be expected to factor in decision-making around entering the industry. Independence and running your own business have been identified as important motivators for farming in general (Gasson and Errington, 1993); these motivations can also be expected amongst new entrants.

Example:

- New entrant hobby farmers typically identify motives associated with the type of work involved in farming, such as manual labour, working outdoors, seasonal changes in work, participating in crop or livestock production.

Social aspirations:

New entrants may be seeking to join a particular social class or social movement when they become farmers.

Examples:

- Heley (2010) and Sutherland (2012) identified individuals establishing large-scale farming operations in part to establish themselves as members of a landed social class of estate owners in the UK.
- New entrants to crofting (small-scale farming in Scotland) in the ProAKIS study expressed the desire to participate in and sustain cultural aspects of crofting, including maintaining a minority dialect (Gaelic) and communal land management, in addition to enabling the continuation of crofting as an agrarian form (Creaney et al., 2014).
- New entrants participating in 'back-to-the-land movements' seek to disconnect themselves from urban society and consumerism (Halfacree, 2013).
- Participating in various social groups (e.g. pedigree and rare breed associations, small-holder associations) and attending associated events was identified as a goal of new entrants to non-commercial farming in the UK (Sutherland, 2012).

Overall, the literature demonstrates that motives are highly varied, and that most new entrants have multiple motivations for entering the agricultural sector. Many of these objectives are also shared by successors to farming operations (see Gasson and Errington, 1993).

Discussion questions

- What other motivations do new entrants have?
- Which of these motivations can be actively cultivated to increase the number of new entrants to farming? How?

4. Who are the new entrants?

New entrants to farming are clearly highly varied. Nevertheless, some trends have been noted in the literature.

Numbers of new entrants: There is no clear evidence of the number of new entrants in European agriculture, although DGIP (2012) records concerns about a shortage of new entrants, on the basis of declining cohorts of sole holders under the age of 35. An American study reported that between 22% and 29% of farmers in the USA had become farmers within the past 10 years (Ahearn and Newton, 2009). These new farmers were a range of ages (i.e. not necessarily young). Approximately 32% of those identified may be considered non-commercial farms, in comparison to 20% amongst the long-term family population. This definition includes successors.

Demographic characteristics: Based on available evidence, while most new entrants are male, they tend to be younger, operate smaller farms, and are more likely to be female than other farmers. These characteristics are also true of new entrants to American agriculture, who were also more likely to be non-white (Ahearn and Newton, 2009). New entrants exist across the range of ages and farm sizes.

Educational achievement: Madureira et al. (2015) found that new entrants to small-scale farming in the Portuguese, Bulgaria and British cases studied had considerably higher educational achievement than the average amongst farmers in the study regions (i.e. frequently to university level).

Geographic locations: Different types of new entrants are more common in different types of regions: lifestyle farms are more common in peri-urban areas, particularly those with high amenity values (e.g. attractive landscapes) and where there is low potential for commercial agriculture (Pinto-Correia et al., 2015). Diversified farms are also more common in peri-urban areas, and are more likely to involve new entrants, although agri-tourism is more common in areas of high amenity value (vacation destinations) which may be more distant. 'Back-to-the-land' farmers typically choose remote rural locations. Land transfer practices are expected to differ considerably between new and original member states.

Commodity types: New entrants are more likely to be involved in livestock production, as opposed to cereal crops, owing to the stronger appeal of raising animals. Livestock production is also characteristic of most organic farms, where new entrants are more common. New entrants may also be more common in horticulture, as much smaller land bases are required than for most commercial agricultural businesses. New entrants also appear to be more likely to be involved in horticultural production as part of self-provisioning and local marketing.

Rates of success: It is difficult to distinguish exits rates from farming in general, as those operating commercially non-viable businesses may retain their land, contracting it out or retaining it for leisure purposes. Within the literature on organic and alternative farming models, the failure of some new entrants is noted, and indeed expected by conventional farming neighbours (e.g. Wilbur, 2013), but does not appear to be quantified. A percentage of mainstream farms can also be expected to be unsuccessful in any given year.

Discussion questions:

- How accurate are these characterisations of new entrants, as defined in this Focus Group?
- What other information is available to characterise new entrants?

5. Types of new entrants and associated business models

As the description of motivations suggests, there are a wide variety of approaches that new entrants take to farming, ranging from commercial microbusinesses to lifestyle properties, novel share cropping and contract farming arrangements, to more traditional full-time and diversified farming models. The follow represent broad, often overlapping, categories.

Alternative agriculture (including organic farming): Sutherland et al. (2015) reported that new entrants studied in the FarmPath FP7 project were more likely to be involved in value-added farming activities (e.g. alternative agri-food networks, local certification schemes), capitalising upon their urban networks and experiences. It is well established in the organic farming literature that organic farmers are more likely to be new entrants (Rigby et al., 2001; Padel, 2001; Lobley et al., 2009). As such, many of these new farmers engage in different marketing channels (e.g. short production chains, direct marketing, box schemes, value added processing) and utilise alternative information sources (e.g. organic farming events and web-sites, organisations like Worldwide Opportunities on Organic farms (WWOOF) and the Biodynamic Association) from mainstream farmers. In line with this, 'alternative' farmers establish connections to organic and other farming peers, and establish 'virtual communities' utilising ICT (Brunori et al., 2011). The reliance on alternative marketing channels and general ethos of alternative agricultural production suggests stronger reliance on communal labour and exchange than is characteristic of mainstream farming practices.

Smallholding: The term 'small-holding' refers to the scale of a land holding, and as such can be occupied by households with a variety of motivations (e.g. to enter farming, to establish a rural residence, or as a second home). In Norway, holdings under 10 ha are subject to different regulations than larger scale farms, making smaller-scale holdings more accessible to residential occupants, although some of these holdings are also occupied by small-scale farmers (Blekesaune et al, 2010). These holdings are often inherited. In the UK, 'smallholding' typically refers to small-scale farmers who produce a variety of commodities, primarily for household consumption and local sales (e.g. through farmers markets, box schemes). Smallholders frequently emphasise low input production. Participants in back-to-the-land movements (below) are thus a type of smallholder. UK smallholders are typically new entrants. Owing to their limited size, smallholdings are typically part-time and do not employ labour.

Back-to-the-land movements: 'Back-to-the-land' migrants to rural areas are typically new entrants to farming. Wilbur (2013), in his Italian study argues that most back-to-the-land farmers are unlikely to engage in 'industrial farming', instead preferring local markets and organic production. Their production is typically small-scale, labour intensive and requiring limited capital investment. Halfacree (2007) and Pinto-Correia et al. (2015) described similar processes in (respectively) the UK and Bulgaria. Back-to-the-land farmers are not well served by commercially-oriented agricultural advisory services, owing to the alternative nature of their information needs. Wilbur (2013), described the importance of alternative knowledge systems (as described above) and demonstrated the reliance on casual knowledge exchange between neighbouring farmers and apprenticeships in order to develop production skills.

Lifestyle and hobby farming: Pinto-Correia et al. (2015) identified new entrants to small-scale farming in Portugal, the UK and Bulgaria, who were undertaking low-tech approaches to land management for 'lifestyle' purposes. They found that new entrant lifestyle farmers were contributing positive environmental and social benefits to rural communities by occupying abandoned land and revitalising traditional practices, although their production levels were low. In the Bulgarian and Portuguese cases, the new entrants were engaged in some small-scale sales of their production. Lifestyle farms are typically small-scale and do not employ labour, although they may make more use of professional services (e.g. veterinarians) than commercial farmers.

Microbusinesses: Madureira et al. (2015) identified a cohort of Portuguese farm microbusinesses being established to exploit opportunities in the specialist small-fruit sector. These part-time farms were typically established on abandoned or under-utilised land held by extended family members of the new entrants. The new enterprises are strongly influenced by private companies who sell a 'package' of advice, including a business plan and application for RDP funding. These holdings represent supplemental income and often involve extensive family labour during harvest. Unlike smallholdings, where commodities are produced primarily for household consumption, these microbusinesses produce for national and international markets.

New estates: UK research by Heley (2010) and Sutherland (2012) demonstrated a cohort of new large-scale rural land owners in the UK who manage their land on a non-commercial basis. In these cases, new entrants are frequently older, having amassed sufficient wealth to enable them to acquire agricultural land and farm recreationally. These holdings do not appear to be actively managed for profit, although it is unlikely they can be run at a substantial loss over the long term. Sutherland (2012) describes cases where business management practices from the business sector are introduced to the farms. Off-farm wealth can also be used to invest in the holding (e.g. new buildings, fencing).

Mainstream commercial farms: There is no information currently available on ex novo entrants to full-time commercial farming.

Discussion questions:

- What other types of new entrants exist? How can their business models be characterised?

6. Overcoming common barriers to new entrants

New entrants to agriculture face a number of barriers. A primary purpose of this Focus Group is to identify how new entrants have overcome these barriers, and the lessons that can be learned to enable other new entrants to join the industry and establish thriving businesses.

Access to land: Establishing a commercially viable farm frequently requires a large land base. The rising capital value of agricultural land and its limited availability is a major barrier to new entrants (Gasson and Errington, 1993; Ingram and Kirwan, 2011). Purchasing land outright is most frequently mentioned in the academic literature. Rental agreements have been experimented with as means of facilitating new entry (e.g. Ingram and Kirwan, 2011; Ilbery et al., 2010). Tenanted land is becoming more difficult to secure by new entrants, as owners typically prefer to reallocate land to existing tenants when it becomes available, or to offer land to successful existing farmers, thereby reducing their own risk (Ilbery et al., 2010). Contract farming is a potential entry point (whereby the contractor owns the machinery and provides labour, making decisions on land management with varying degrees of autonomy from the land owner) (see Lobley et al., 2004 for a UK example), but little is known about this practice. The increasing number of contract farming arrangements may indeed be a barrier to new entrants. Small-scale farms can also be difficult to access, where the rewards of selling are limited in comparison to the loss of a valued family resource, which is instead retained for recreational use (Moragues-Faus, 2014). When land becomes available, new entrants find themselves competing for land with existing farmers, who are attempting to achieve economies of scale. Land fragmentation is also an issue, particularly in countries where land is traditionally divided between multiple successors (e.g. 'multiple succession', see Burton and Walford, 2005). Resultant units may not be economically viable.

High start-up costs: Contemporary commercial farms typically require considerable investment in supporting infrastructure (buildings, machinery etc) in addition to farm land. This barrier is particularly important for young people entering agriculture, who do not have inherited or earned wealth to draw upon. Leveraging sufficient capital to invest in a commercial farm business represents a considerable challenge.

Low profitability: An important barrier to entrance is the difficulty in achieving a satisfactory standard of living from farm work (DGIP, 2012). Young people in particular are unlikely to enter a profession where there is little financial reward.

Low status associated with farming: Zagata and Lošťák (2014) found that agriculture and farming are low status in many European countries, acting as a social barrier to entrance.

Limited desirability of rural life: Evidence from Greece suggests that the unwillingness of young women to live in rural areas limits the entrance of women to farming, as well as the establishment of new entrant farming households (Gidakou et al., 2007).

Access to information: One particular strength of new entrants is the networks they draw on outside of agriculture, enabling diversification and innovation (Sutherland et al., 2015). Madureira et al. (2015) found that new entrants to small-scale farming in the Portuguese, Bulgaria and British cases studied were initially disconnected from traditional agricultural knowledge systems. They also had differing knowledge needs and preferences. For example, in all three cases when formal advisory services were accessed, this was primarily to complete subsidy applications.

ICT: Madureira et al. (2015) also found that younger new entrants were particularly adept at using ICT in their farms, particularly for advertising farm business and diversification activities (e.g. advertising their bed and breakfasts) (Maureira et al., 2015). Pinto-Correia et al. (2015) identified access to ICT (e.g. high speed broadband) as an important factor in the decision to relocate to a lifestyle property. In her cases, ICT was not specifically identified as important to business development; instead, ICT represented part of an amenity lifestyle and enabled remote working.

Organisation of labour (part-time farming and pluriactivity): New entrants are more likely to be part-time, owing to the high capital costs of establishing a financially viable large-scale farming operation. New entrants are thus more likely to be pluriactive, and involved in specific types of farm diversification (e.g. bed and breakfast). Types of farm diversification requiring substantial capital investment (in addition to the capital needed for acquiring the farm itself) are generally beyond the financial capacity of most new entrants (e.g. large-scale renewable energy). Alternatively, owners of successful rural businesses may choose to invest in agricultural land, which they manage commercially or non-commercially.

Access to markets: It can be difficult for new entrants to integrate into established supply chains (e.g. accessing dairy quota). New entrants are more likely to be involved in alternative marketing schemes (e.g. short production chains, locally certified food).

Discussion questions:

- What other barriers to new entrants exist? How have they been overcome by different types of new entrants? (see Table 1)
- How do the examples of new entrants you know, fit into Table 1?

Table 1 New entrant innovation matrix

Overcoming barriers/ Types of farming	Access to land	Access to capital/ funding	Knowledge systems and ICT	Organisation of labour	Agricultural techniques	Marketing	Source of Innovation
Alternative agriculture (including organic farming)	Short term rental agreements					Farmers markets, box schemes	
Smallholding				Part-time family employment.			
Back to the land movement			Local / traditional knowledge				
Lifestyle and hobby farms			Highly computer literate, numerous smallholding magazines and associations.				Urban residents seeking to reconnect with nature, produce and consume healthy food.
Micro-businesses						High value products (horticulture)	
New estates		Reinvested capital gained outside agriculture		Low labour input or hired labour			

7. Development: Growth Scenarios and Influence on Existing Farming practices

A key focus of the discussion group is to identify the ways in which new entrants can influence positive change in the agricultural industry, by introducing new innovations. Many of these will include innovations to overcome barriers to successful business establishment, which can usefully be adopted by longer term farmers. During the Focus Group, participants will discuss how the new entrants they are familiar with have overcome these barriers, addressing the questions below. Some potential examples are given in Table 1.

Access to land

What methods are used by the new entrants to gain access to land or to increase the size of their holdings?

Funding/Access to capital

How do new entrants fund their initial farm and how do they fulfil subsequent funding needs?

Knowledge systems

What knowledge systems do the new entrants use when setting up their farm and how do they tap into knowledge systems later on?

Organisation of labour

How do new entrants fulfil the labour needs for their farms?

Agricultural techniques

What farming techniques do the new entrants apply? What are the skills and tools related to these techniques and how do the new entrants acquire these skills and tools?

Marketing

How do new entrants sell their produce / services?

Source of innovation

Where did the new ideas for this approach to farming come from? What are the implications for the spread of the innovation?

Discussion questions:

- What other examples can you describe?
- What are the most desirable trajectories for new entrants to farming?

8. Summary

New entrants to farming are elusive: although many examples exist, it is not easy to define them. It is assumed that they bring innovative methods and models but there is little hard evidence to support this contention. The Focus Group will explore:

- The numerical importance of new entrants, at European, national and regional levels. To date, research has conflated successors with new entrants, making it difficult to assess their prevalence and impact within the sector.
- The demographic characteristics of new entrants, including gender, age and educational achievement. The limited evidence available suggests that supports for new entrants may have an impact on long-standing demographic imbalances within the agriculture sector.
- The impact and opportunities for new entrants in particular types of geographic area. Most of the research on this topic relates to recreational or lifestyle farming, suggesting positive environmental and social benefits. Little is known about the economic impact of new entrants within specific supply chains, or rural areas more broadly.
- The relative success rates of new entrants. The available evidence suggests that some long-term farmers anticipate the failure of many new entrants to the industry, particularly if the new entrants are pursuing non-traditional farming approaches. Although the purpose of the Focus Group is to identify successful new entrant trajectories, it will also be important to assess where new entrants are failing, and why.
- The commercial commodities produced by new entrants, and the associated business models. To date new entrants have been mentioned in relation to particular commodities or models (e.g. alternative food, horticulture) but research has not systematically identified their impact within these sectors, or how they are overcoming entrance barriers. Evidence of new entrance into commercial production of conventional commodities is particularly lacking.
- Innovations introduced by new entrants, and how these can be used to enable a more innovative agriculture sector. There is evidence that new entrants are introducing innovations, but this is patchy. There is even less evidence that these innovations are spreading through out the industry, and what processes might be involved.
- Impact of existing policy measures to support new entrants, in relation to the new entrants addressed in this Focus Group. Although several assessments have been undertaken of new entrant supports, as these include successors. New entrants may also be benefiting through other subsidy supports (e.g. Single Farm Payments, RDP).

Discussion questions:

- What other gaps exist?
- Can you help to fill these gaps?

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10. Appendix A: Definitions of 'new entrants'

New entrants to agriculture have been defined in a number of ways.

a. European Policy Supports

New entrants to farming are supported through the Common Agriculture Policy (2014-2020); supports include access to and top-up grants for the Single Farm Payment entitlements under Pillar 1, and business development grants under Pillar 2. In defining eligibility for these supports, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union have defined new entrants as follows:

'farmers commencing their agricultural activity' means natural or legal persons who, in the five years preceding the start of the agricultural activity, did not have any agricultural activity in their own name and at their own risk or did not have the control of a legal person exercising an agricultural activity... Member States may establish their own additional objective and non-discriminative eligibility criteria for this category of farmers as regards appropriate skills, experience or education. (Official Journal of the European Union, 20-12-2013, pp. 347)

The regulations are aimed at supporting young farmers to enter the sector:

For the purposes of this Chapter, 'young farmers', means natural persons:

- (a) who are setting up for the first time an agricultural holding as head of the holding, or who have already set up such a holding during the five years preceding the first submission of an application under the basic payment scheme or the single area payment scheme referred to in Article 72(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013; and (b) who are no more than 40 years of age in the year of submission of the application referred to in point (a).

Other requirements for funding include evidence of formal agricultural training or experience working on a farm. As such, new entrants within EU legislation are defined as sole holders of 40 years' age and under, who are setting up or have set up a holding during the previous 5 years. For young farmer supports, funding is available for 5 years from the date of application. In the case of set-up grants, support is limited to 24 months from the date of farm establishment.

Strengths and weaknesses: The EU policy definitions of new entrants provide helpful guides as to the period of time during which an individual can be considered a 'new entrant' (i.e. five years) and the role the individual plays in the agricultural holding (i.e. that the activity must be in their own name). It is also clear that the new entrant must be a person (i.e. not a corporation). However, in restricting supports to people less than 41 years of age, older new entrants are excluded. The definition does not exclude successors; individuals inheriting a farm business before the age of 41 satisfy the criteria of 'setting up for the first time ... as head of the holding'.

b) International Policy Supports

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines 'beginning farmers and ranchers' as individuals or groups who have operated a farm or ranch for 10 years or less (Ahearn and Newton, 2009). If there is more than one operator, all must have less than 10 years' experience. The 10-year designation was first introduced by the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992, which enables reduced interest rate loans to be offered to beginning farmers and ranchers. The USDA definition of a farm is any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold during a reference year.

The Canadian government does not appear to have a national-level programme supporting new entrants to farming, although farms are included within assistance provided to new business start-ups (Pouliot, 2011). Instead, new entrant supports are available at provincial level. For example, Serkougou (2014)

describes a number of programmes available in the province of Quebec. The criteria for one of these programs is to be between 18 and 40 years of age, have recognised (agricultural) training, plan on making farming their livelihood, have a business plan that demonstrates profitability, plan on making agriculture their livelihood and conform to environmental regulations.

Uchiyama (2014) describes Japanese new entrant supports. These are oriented primarily towards successors to existing farming businesses, reflecting strong historic rules requiring transfer of farmland on the basis of kinship. Measures include inheritance tax relief and pension top-ups for early retirement, and encourage succession prior to the age of 35. A farm succession aid programme exists for Japanese farmers who do not have successors; the criteria for access are not clear, but appear based on age and lack of other access to farm land.

There do not appear to be national-level supports for new entrants to farming in Australia. Some new entrant programmes in New Zealand were mentioned in the Barr (2014) Australian report, but subsequent searching did not bring these to light.

Strengths and weaknesses: The USDA definition identifies a longer time period than the EU during which an individual is considered a new entrant. The USDA definition also enables co-owners (i.e. groups) to be considered new entrants. Ahearn and Newton (2009) note that the broad definition of 'farm' in the US leads to the inclusion in resultant figures of a number of individuals who use their farm solely for residential purposes. In the Quebec case, lifestyle farming is excluded and new entrants are defined as 40 and under. In the Japanese case, supports are primarily aimed at somewhat younger people than in the EU and the USA. Uchiyama (2014) reported that the farm succession aid programme had limited success in bringing new people into the industry, owing to disagreements about the value and transfer of the agriculture holding. In all three cases, the definitions of new entrants include successors.

c) European Statistics

Eurostat does not assess the duration of an individual's tenure as a farmer. It is therefore not possible to utilise Eurostat figures to assess the number new entrants to European agriculture. In line with international statistical analyses demonstrating shortages of 'new entrants', this concern is based on declining number of younger farmers (see DGIP, 2012).

Strengths and weaknesses: As Zagata and Sutherland (2015) point out, Eurostat figures conflate young farmers with new entrants. Successors are also not identified, so it is impossible to assess the number of new entrants who have (or have not) inherited their farms.

d) European Research Studies

The vast majority of the academic studies addressing new entrants to farming in Europe focus on farm succession. A limited number of studies address the success of new entrant support programmes – thus defining new entrants in policy terms, or on the lack of young people in farming. For example, a study of new entrant supports in the UK defined new entrants generally as 'non-successors', developing a binary distinction between those farmers who inherited their farm directly, and those who did not (Ilbery et al., 2010). In line with EU policies they assess, these studies tend to conflate new entrants with young sole holders.

Few studies have come to light which focus specifically on assessing the number or characteristics of new entrants to farming in Europe. The ProAKIS FP7 project specifically addressed new entrants to farming in a set of case studies on agricultural knowledge systems amongst small-scale farmers. In this research, new entrants were defined differently in the cases: new entrants in the Bulgarian case were defined as individuals receiving Rural Development Programme (RDP) supports for new entrants; in the Polish case new entrants were existing farmers who were developing a new farm diversification opportunity (agri-tourism); new entrants in the Portuguese case were individuals accessing RDP funding to establish new micro-businesses on family-held land; the Scottish case focused on both successors and non-successors

with less than 12 years' tenure on their holdings. From the study, it became evident that new entrants may purchase land outright, but commonly also access land held by extended family members or enter into contracting arrangements.

A study of lifestyle farmers in Bulgaria, Portugal and Scotland (part of the FarmPath FP7 project) describes the complex range of backgrounds characterising 'new entrants': members of 'back-to-the-land' movements who are completely new to agriculture; individuals who were raised on farms but return as successors after an urban career; individuals raised on farms but returning to the local area to set up a new farming enterprise at a variety of life stages; individuals accessing farm land through family relationships but not direct succession; and individuals with a variety of farm and non-farm backgrounds migrating to farms in southern Europe in search of amenity lifestyles (Pinto-Correia et al., 2015). In a related study, Lošťák et al. (2005) defined new entrants as 'newcomers to the area', in their case studies in the Czech Republic, Greece and Bulgaria, but noted that many of these newcomers were the descendants of local people, who had previously lived in urban areas.

There are also a number of studies where new entrants are mentioned in passing. These studies relate to particular innovations in agriculture, such as organic farming, back-to-the-land movements, small holding and hobby farming. In these cases, new entrants are noted to be more common amongst the study sample, but the definition of a new entrant is not typically formally defined.

There are also studies where 'new entrants' refer to existing farmers who are entering a new sector (e.g. 'new entrants to the dairy sector' in McDonald et al., 2014).

Strengths and weaknesses: There is no consistent definition of new entrants to farming adopted in the academic literature. The literature is helpful for demonstrating the complex ways in which an individual or group can enter the farming industry.

e) International Research Studies

The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (JMAFF) began to collect statistics on new entrants to farming in 2006, differentiating between new entrants who come 'back to home farms' from non-farming jobs (i.e. farmers' children or retired people); those who are 'new employees in farm businesses'; and those who 'create new farms' (i.e. who do not succeed to farmland by kinship) (Uchiyama, 2014).

In an Australian study (Barr, 2014), new entrants were defined utilising proxy data from the agricultural census - those who report living at a new address and who described their main occupation as farming were assumed to be new entrants to farming. A rate of entry to agriculture was calculated as a ratio of the total number of farmer and farm managers in the Statistical Local Area.

Strengths and weaknesses: In the above cases, a more nuanced definition of new entrants is developed, recognising that new entrance can occur at any age, and that successors can return to farming after a considerable period of time away, potentially bringing the same skills and resources as new entrants without prior agricultural experience. The definitions also indicate the challenges in adequately defining who is a successor.

Overall assessment: There is very limited research specifically addressing *ex novo* new entrants in Europe. The academic literature tends to focus on succession, whereas the policy literature tends to conflate new entrants with successors and/or young farmers. There are few statistics available to support analyses of *ex novo* new entrants into agriculture – the USA appears to be the only country in which statistics on entrance into agriculture are specifically collected, but even in that case, the new entrants could be successors. The definition of new entrants to farming is complicated by the variety of ways in which an individual can access agricultural land or work experience, and the different stages in the life course during which an individual or group may decide to take up farming.